

6-2021

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OVAL LISTENER

**does not notice
his wife behind him
at the frapes.
Suddenly the room
floods with light.
He sees facing him
across his desk
two young men
who share one physical
anomaly: each
is seven feet two inches
tall. One is black
and one is white.
They smile at each other,
they bond.
The wife smiles too
but no one notices.
She leaves the room.**

**2.
If they talk at all
these nice young men**

it is of low tech matters--
washing machines,
carburetors.

The listener is puzzled,
he himself spent half the night
dreaming about laundry,
overflows, shallow streams,
bundles of wet clothes,
drains free and clogged.
Where is the world
he wonders of now,
swift invisible motions
that change everything?

3.

The young men are quiet,
examining a section of the wall
as children might study a map.
Here is Prague, this must be
the Vltava, so this here
must be Austria, the thing
under there. How far
everything is!

4.

The listener tries
to engage them in talk,
they look like brothers
but the colors seem wrong.
Have you finished college?
The young men laugh:
we hve never seen each other
till this moment, this room.
Where I come from
the white one says
we don't have colleges.
We have them, says the black
young man, but they are just for priests.
But why do you look so alike?
Because you have two eyes.

5.

The oval listener
is annoyed by the answer,
sounds snarky like poetry,

and yet, and yet.

To listen, he thinks, is to be oval,
like an egg growing in its shell until,
until the information heard
ripens, shells fall away,
a new idea struts around the mind.
Is that how it is with me now?

6.

The young men have turned
their attention from the wall
and are looking out the window,
softly naming each thing they see
until the listener, who knows
full well the stuff out there
begins to doubt his knowing--
locust tree? Anarchist bookshop?
Falafel stand? A fountain?
He's tempted to turn around
to see for himself,
or at least to ask questions.
He holds back. Questions
are dangerous at best.

7.

He thinks, or maybe hopes,
vague that his wife
somehow is behind all this,
arranged for these polite
peculiar strangers to show up.
It's just like her, he thinks,
sighs, rests chin in his hand.
I need a shave. I'll ask her.

8.

But the young men are finished
with their inventory,
come back and face him.
We're finished now, we may
come back some day
when you are in another room
and help you there,
but our work today is done.
Thank you for your calm,
we know it's never easy
having strangers in the house.

9,

But did she call and ask you
to come to me, my wife I mean?
The young men were out the door by then,
didn't answer, the door closed
just like any other day.
Got up from desk at last,
looked out the window,
tree, yes, but is it locust?
Where is that bookshop?
What exactly is falafel?
His only hope is to ask his wife.

1 June 2021

= = = = =

**How many lines are there in it?
Enough.**

**How many words in each line?
One or two too many usually
but sometimes they get it right.**

**Who is they?
The ones whose breaths
divide the words they read--
it's up to them to get it right.**

**So the writer is not responsible
for the words written down?
How could the writer be—
the words were there already,
hungry for the writer's hands—**

**you wouldn't want to blame
the words themselves
for being less than beautiful?**

June 2021 8

**Of course not—the fault
if it exists must be in us,
the lazy readers, dozing
on the park bench of the mind.**

1 June 2021

ROOM REMEMBERS

That is the core
of the problem, space
has us in it
and will not let us go.

2.

So where we are
is what we are--
travel at your peril,
your salvation.

3.

Walls are pages,
the lyrics of the loveliest room
sift seduction round you.
Opening a door
is almost getting married.

4.

Flower pots
on the windowsill
outside
but the smell comes in.

**Do you understand now
what they were trying,
your aunts, grandmothers
with their peonies,
trying to tell you?**

**5.
If we are mostly skin,
our largest organ,
think what a room
must feel when we go in.**

**6.
I think science and society
both yearn for some
hypothetical inert matter,
matter that does not speak.
Has no story to tell.
But everything talks.**

7.

Even something you think
for the first time,
some sentence you say
you've never said or thought before,
it too is a quotation
from some ancient liturgy,
the Mass of the Pleistocene,
one more remember.

8.

I give you this flower
I think it's an iris,
soft and blue,
to hold to your heart
to make you safe
a moment from
the insinuations of the wall,
safe by way of something
quick in your startled hand.

9.

Then of course we go outside,
we all do, no walls anywhere!
What do I know
and how do I know it
we used to sing
as we danced on the lawn
waiting for the Green Man
and the Green Girl
to rush in from the woods
and change us all
into what we really are,
Outside is still there,
the air thick with reminiscence,
we go out here still,
still waiting, waiting
for the beginning.

2 June 2021

= = = = =

If you had a camera could
take a snapshot of time
would you call it a word,
a tune, a sentence on the blackboard,
incomplete, go get more chalk,
or look down into your palms,
is it there already, camera
and image, word and song,
heaven in the single touch?

2 June 2021

= = = = =

Some emigrants never left.
They're still over in Roscommon
or Monaghan wondering why.
At night they often stand
by the petrol pump
or the closed grocery
wondering what place
is this I am, how long
does now last, is this
the same as home?
Then why am I
not really here?

2 June 2021

ANNIVERSARY

for Charlotte

**If as the mystics claim
a human life is ranged
in seven year phases
then the secret unseen
human of our union
is entering the fifth stage
today, we are married now
for twenty-eight years.**

2.

**And in the fifth stage
a young woman or young man
takes the first firm steps
intop the vocation or profession
or work she or he will do
for the main part of their lives..**

5.

**It is strange to think that all
the joys of these almost thgrity years**

are just a beginning. Or could be
ending tpp, and some other form
of being would possess
the youthful creature that had been us.

4.

4.

I think you are tired of me and mine
but I am not tired of you.

This contradiction though
actually gives each of us a strength
to shape, or be shaped by,
what has to come next. Love
does strange things to time, in time.

5.

You are the finest woman I have ever known,
, smartest, truest, most beautiful. So there.

But your wisdom leaves you free to change
when change is needed. Alas, I'm not so wise.

6.

So let me greet you, my love,
one more morning, one more year.
I write this before dawn, dark,
we were awakened when a picture
downstairs fell off the wall.
Probably my fault, probably
I brushed against it on my way
upstairs. All of it my fault.
The same old story. But it has
kept me happy so many years.
I hope you too, a little, ddar;ing.
Happy anniversary, my love
if such a thing will let us be.

3 June 2021

= = = = =

**Divide thy house
until it stands
firm intact
in what it means
and lets you in.**

**2.
Room by room
analyze the evidence
of what you've done,
cast out iniquity,
furniture, traces
of that devil
the man you were.**

**3.
And maybe still are,
a house knows these things,
let the house decide.**

4.

Even an empty room
remembers,
I have been told.
The little cube
is empty, still reeks
of what has been.

5.

People say they're moving,
call the moving men.
carry all the stuff away
but leave the house behind.
Someone moves in--
how can you dare
to sleep in someone else's house?
Spaces are contagious.

6.

Maybe humans went
through all this long ago,
tore down all their houses

June 2021 20

**and lived in caves--
as if the earth would
ever let us forget.**

3 June 2021

= = = = =

**How wise Dr Mesmer was,
his famous passes
cured the body
over which his hands moved
without ever touching it,
no skin, not even clothes,
just meaningful repetitions
of gestures through the air
just above the body's surface—
I think Beethoven understood,
all the uncanny remepitions
in his music, passing again
and again over the
shape of our hearing, shape
of ourselves. Touch would tell
--or take--too much.**

3 June 2021

June 2021 22

= = = = =

A car far off
shiny
moveless in the trees—

a neighbor's driveway
but no house is seen,
just a gleam in the green,

postcard from another earth.

3 June 2021

THE INSTRUCTION

Where did we go wrong, Claire?
When you kept me waiting
in that parking lot in Amherst.
But we never lived in Amherst,
I never kept you waiting there
in the space behind the school,
yet there's something wrong
between us, Claire, the toast
tastes wrong, there is gloom
over us at table, 'glark and doomy'
you joked but did not laugh.

2.

So I told you my dream,
how my keys were way uptown
and I had no phone but had to
call someone —wasit you?—
to get a ride home. After
a whole lot of maneuvering
I found myself in a cab
comfortable enough, chugging

uptown under the Third Avenue El
through the ruins of the East Side,
still some restaurants here and there.
North, I cried! North to where
my office was, with my keys in it
and an ordinary telephone.
I sat back in the leather upholstery,
what kind of cab was this?
and said my prayers.

3.
Does that explain
where I went wrong?
As we drove north
I couldn't even picture you.
Were you waiting?
Were you blond?
And was it you
speaking German softly
at the back of my mind?

4.

Of course in any dream
I am someone else
and you are too. And how
could any dream be true
with no tree in it?
Just the iron pillars of the El,
the scouring sound of wind
through the half open window.
City wind, posters on the wall,
obsolete ,illegible, fluttering.

5.

A dream is a vacation
where things don't fit
our expectations, streets
smell of boiled cabbage,
hotel room full of rabbits,
tons on plastic refuse on the beach,
hot sunshine but are you even
sure that is water washing
up the littered shore?
You know it's a dream

when in your own fingers
your credit card turns to sand
and sifts away. Knowing
is a kind of comfort--
someday you'll get on the plane,
settle in, fly north and wake.

6.
Forgive me, Claire,
I forgot you were here,
so patient with me
your sweet angry face.
I learn from your eyes
what I should have known
long before, teach me,
teach me to play the cello,
teach me the underside of speech,
the backdoor of the heart,
teach me, only you can do it,
I need to learn to swim
before I go to sleep again.

4 June 2021

= = = = =

**There's the head of the table
and the foot of the table
and in between are the table's
many arms, that clutch us
by the waist and drag us to
the full or empty board.
We are trapped into talk.
As long as we sit here
we have to keep talking,
it is the rule of substance
on our poor boidies--
stand and walk, sit and talk.
No way out. No wonder
Christians make the table
the focus of their worship,
way up there in the sanctuary,
let us come close, close,
someday we too might be able
to sit at that table where no one sits.**

4 June 2021

= = = = =

Someone is standing
against the wall,
bare left arm raised,
the palm cushioning
the back of the head,
the bony elbow also
pressed to the wall.
Now on the soft, so
seldom exposed,
underside of the elbow
plant one chaste kiss.
In ancient medicine
this kiss releases
a shimmer of white [aint
that wipes out
in an instant all
the stains of need
and want and grasp
and have. Or seems to.
In fact the white
just hides a while

June 2021 29

**all those sad memorials
until it too has scars,
blemishes, reminiscences.
Till then, kiss, jiss,
white, white, the light!**

5 June 2021

STONE FRUIT

Lifting the basket
uncover another.
Peaches unripe,
tough as tennis
balls to the touch.
People hide strange.

2.
You should never
go down in the cellar,
there are too many
identities there, earth
walls, womb of
the one who comes.

3.
Chew your pencil till
it writes a word
you do not think. Then,
then you will be free.

4.

Parsimonious agate,
spendthrift amethyst.
So now you know.
One in each hand,
rise to the sky.
There is nowhere else.

5.

That one tree
so full now,
more talkative
than others.
It works the wind—
the others learn
from its loft and lift.

6.

It's not all stone and wood,
not even all leaf and breeze.
The little mouse of Me
skitters through the hours
hunting for what it doesn't know.

7.

**Who are you calling me?
Put on your clothes
and come to ned, why not,
you do everything anyway wrong.**

8.

**That alexandrite ring
you brought yes in Egypt
shows two different colors
depending on the light.
It says what I keep telling
you: eat the darkness
but depend on the light.**

9.

**Sermons are chunks
of unripe fruit.
Spit it out and listen
to the silence instead.**

10.

Like the stone says—
sit still.

Even the tree is quiet now
as if I had understood.

5 June 2021

= = = = =

I stand on the balcony
I preach to passing birds.
I feel immensely privileged,
to be tolerated as I am'
by gravity and atmosphere.
I can breathe out here!
And what I say must make
some sort of sense because
the birds keep flying by.

5 June 2021

IN THE WAKE

Room full of people
smoking--remember?
Whispered conversation,
blue satin sheets
in the other room, midnight.
Memory matter
sifts through the now,
agreeable irritants. Smile.

2.
Lipstick. bowling alleys.
Convertibles. Not gone
but not now. I miss the *chung*
of the cigarette machine
as a pack of Luckies
dropped down the chute.
Memory has its own
assembly line, and stuff
like this is what it makes.

3.

Behind each secular memory
is a sacred memory opens,
a sudden sacrament
blesses me with meaning.
I will not give examples—
one doesn't talk about such things.

4.

So ride the ferry as far as it goes,
sit out on deck in the rain
for all I care,
we're only water mostly anyhow,
and the wind is a gospel of its own.

5.

So one day I sprawled on the prow
watching the sea below divide,
dark water churned instantly
white on the left and on the right
as if the boat could bring

some illumination of its own.
Or is our passage just a scar
a few minutes of peace will heal?

6.
Particulars in poetry
can annoy
but not as much
as sermons do.
And I am guilty
of both sins,
but I have to keep
telling you
what dream tell me,
what the night says
and why the day
is the flashing wake
of that dark cruise
and maybe why
we say awake.

6 June 2021

= = = = =

I want to be explicit
as that beech tree
by the road, its leaves
lettering the sky
so I can read.
There must be an air
that tells us all,
and that tree
hears it best.
Language users
are just copycats.

6 June 2021

THE HELLESPONT

yes all the crossings
liberal with legends,
sunrise, squid
in shallow water,
who is your mother dome
your pentacle?

2.

The motor surges
pilgrims shudder
not for the sea
came we
they mutter
and this
is the narrowest
water there is.
You must understand,
you must cross water
on your way to anywhere.
That is the rule, the goal.

3.

Horses used to help,
chariots, archers,
girls in drag, seashells,
dolphin, but mostly horse.
And when the horse time ended,
the pilgrims also stopped.
Those animals were leading us
but now we sleep.

4.

Legends aver.
We listen
in that same sleep.
Write your name
on every wall
until your house
spreads its door.
Stories like that,
her arms are wings,
your countryside,
stay here, her breast.

5.

Even stepping over
the trickle of a brook
goes you through
shimmer of the other
penetrated, known.

6.

And they are always watching,
be sure of that,
children of the chariot,
their work now
to observe you from inside--
can't you feel them breathing?

7.

Some day we may
be pilgrims again,
raft across the river,
hop the stream.
Till then its moors

and forests, and deserts
scare you with huge daylight
as if the sky fell to earth
and broke the little world.

8.

I admit it
I am your mother
reborn as no one's
father, I murmur
Come with me
and stay where I am,
I am the only
place to be,
forget your grand canal,,
your straits of Sunday—
isn't that what mothers
always say? It's always
Monday where I am,
a man with too much memory.

9.

It is quiet now,
the opera of the wind
is finished, the trees
resume their quiet
conversation, people
(remember people?)
rouse to what they
have been taught to call
work. Up from sweaty
bedsheets, wash
and drift downtown
where others wait
to waste their time too.
You'd think the sea
alone could cure such
minor-league misery
with its tumultuous
loud baptizing salty joyous
all-heal eternal catastrophe.

10.

Don't look at me though
as if I were a horse.

I'm nervous enough for one
but I don't know how to go.
Every poem is a confession,
not necessarily of the one
who presumed to write it,
here, or nearby, or somewhere
you found it in that old book.
Doesn't matter. You found it,
you read it. That makes you
complicit. That is the law.
No bird without a sky.

7 June 2021

INN

They call him a publican,
he serves them
a strange ale flavored with nettles,
it keeps them a little sober
while they swill.
He helps them when they fall asleep.
Soon the benches
are full of snorers,
he passes among them
making sure they're safe,
don't dream too much,
don't topple to the ground.
But when they wake
all by themselves
he's gone. The keg is empty.
There's some weird
light that might be sky.

7 June 2021

HOROLOGY

1.

**The hour comes
but also goes,
the moment unfolds,
a tangerine
segment by segment,
the juice of it
sweet in the lips.**

2.

**Hold it there a while,
salute the salivary glands
with this information,
they are sensitive
to the subtle, send
through their network
news the whole body
attends to with interest.**

3.

Because I was a boy
and am a body still
I know these things.
When you wake
before the mail comes
it is the Old Stone Age again,
morning and bird hoots,
wind in trees and nothing more.
Things like to fall from the hand.

4.

Time divides
into what I mean
and what I don't understand.
Taste of an idiom.
Letter in the mail.

5.

Prayers we learned as children
and why not?
The word in my mouth
comes from someone else--
that is the sad

**glad truth of language.
That is where time comes in,
the sharing dimension
that makes sure everything
gets everywhere eventually
and every word gets said.**

8 June 2021

= = = = =

Rosebud tree
by the shed
reminds me
of old Persia,
who planted
this poem
in our yard?
And once those woods
were just a slope of weeds--
time is so kind
sometimes.

8 June 2021

= = = = =

Name all the islands
you've landed on.
At once the doubts arise--
does Iceland count,
isn't it too big? Or what
about Long where I was born,
did I land there
or just happen there
or did it happen to me.

8 June 2021

= = = = =

Ballet lessons
in the parking lot
behind the drug store.
Loud loudspeaker
saying vaguely
classical orchestra
middle-modern,
Russian I'd guess
and the kids— or
are they older? —
leap about
in the shade of a big
tree that mostly
hides them from me,
their only audience
now that my wife
has gone into the store.
Movement and music,
what more could this
world ask, empty asphalt
crowded with dance.

8 June 2021

THE INTEGERS

weave together
till the numbers
make no sense,
if they ever did,
I heard an answer anyhow,
a breath exhaled
from someone
weary of counting.
I took comfort from the sound
I turned around and around
in my head till it turned
into a word, a word heard.

2.

The breath lasts,
turns into the air

of the room we breathe in--
that too comes from the word,
the same word, same
unknown language.

3.

Fine mesh window screen
insect crawls along,
tiny insect but too nig
to get through the mesh,
infinity of intersections
and no gate, trying
to get in or out.
I feel compassion
and a little fear,
what if it is in already
and comes to bite me,
comes to be me?

(cetera desunt) 9 June 2021

SCHÖNBRÜNN

**Mark on paper
ceremony of care**

a horn is heard

**in the animal garden
a bouquet
lets itself be heard**

roses irises camellias

the horn again

**below the palace
nothing but a rolling lawn**

at peace

I play this horn
to please my father
the young man says

yellow of the palace walls

and in the garden
an old stag's panting breath
rhyme along the horn

I was there when the mark was made
I heard the horn.

10 June 2021

= = = = =

Gravel driveways
growl a welcome
to the weighty wheels
run over them
and make the people
of the house aware
of people in the car.
The story goes
something like that,
How many people,
what kind of car,
the gravel can't tell yet
or it may say but we
can;'t understand
the differences it sings.
Scholars are divided
on whether gravel
is as wise as one stone
from which it was crushed

or as all the thousand
little stones it has become.
Who can ell the limits
of wisdom? Hear gravel,
heat water, coffee, tea.
Even we are smart
enough to know that.

10 June 2021

= = = = =

**New moon tonight
in Gemini, sun
and moon hold hands,
play Hansel and Gretel
in the endless forests of space,
a touch of eternity. This
means to be a love song
because we too have hands.**

10 June 2021

= = = = =

Islands are always mysterious,
the bold effrontery of just being there
solid in sunlight amidst all that flows,
solid, or solid seeming, and a rock
shoves out of the water and we stay.
How big does land have to be
before it stops being an island?
Does it ever? Is there anything but island
ever? Isn't American Great Turtle Island?
Somebody told me that. But leave
quibbling aside Take an island, say
smaller than Ireland, bigger than Staten
and find your way to the heart of it.
Does it have a heart? Stand there and survey
the tensions in you that brought you there,
your whims and wills and wheels and whoosh
you're in the dark again, no wiser.
An island has too much to tell
for any one of us to apprehend. Story

means what an island tells. No tale
without a teller lurking in the rock,
sand, rough beach grass, field of wheat.
Look at the difference between island
and mainland. Manhattan and the Bronx.

10 June 2021

= = = = =

Going to sleep
is sometimes the longest trip,
the train rumbles on
and you never get there,
Of course it's the window fan
but just the same, Ohio,
Michigan, Dakota, Idaho
and still no ocean in sight
to float away on into
the sometimes peaceful dark.
But at least as you go and go
there are so many cities on the way,
cool museums, creepy suburbs
and sometimes a tower flashing gold.

10 June 2021

= = = = =

**Make a mark on page
and see who comes
out of it, turn over
any leaf at risk —
sometimes the tree
turns over with it**

**Watch the vultures
walk the sky, men talk
quietly into an empty
room as if your own
mother still lived there
then close the door
and try not to cry.**

**10 June 2021
(oral)**

= = = = =

Naturally middle
is open prairie
where some praties grow
I thought I heard
me father sing,
the way it does
we always hear

2.
want me want for.
Joel, dear friend,
It me join
your Sanhedrin—
non-voting member
to be sure—
I yearn to hear
discussion and decision

open the word up
to get the meat of it.
And so language
feedeth us.

3.
You would have swept
her off her feet
but she was up
in God's air to begin with,
bhe knew the secret
pf how stonecan fly.

4.
Warm in the parking
lot where I wait
wondering why they said 'park
your car' just where
it can't run and play.

I qm near the trees,
leaves have so many
ways to say with silence—
silence is such a potent tool.

5.
Watch my alphabet for me
while I summon sound.
Don't let the letters
drift too far or come
too close to one another,
lord knows what
would come of it if
one letter married another.

6.
I'm asking a lot of you
and why not?
The sun, she shines,
the moon, he wanes,
they're holding hands

**in Gemini, Now who can say
what may come of this?
Propinquity a mystery.
Every touch a marriage.**

**10 June 2021
Rd Hook**

= = = = =

I am near the trees,
I pray ti the shady place
between me and the sun
wishing could stand
in that deep between-ness
where the leaves
never stop talking.

10 June 2021
Red Hook

HOPE FOR IT GOES

is how it sounded
fear when a foreign
language makes
American sense.

2.

Dome vowels go
on opening,
o give me my long breath back
that could chide the Pope in Latin
and do it ,, reverently, give me
ever-rolling Ls and Rs that build
against the sky like the mountains they are.

3.

But what did it mean
the sentence I heard?
Or what did it mean
the kiss that I dreamed,
the card in my hand,
the travertine wall
graved with the names and titles
of learned rabbis, all
beginning with the letter L,
all with the initials of their
multitudinous doctorates?
I ask hard questions
because it is morning
and the day owes me something
for waking me up.

4.

But no answers are implied
by asking. And who
is there to ask? The quiet tree
I will not disturb

with a squall of conversation,
and who else would know
anything about now?
Sleep now says a cat in a cartoon
and when you wake
you will think you are awake
and when you speak
you will think you have answered..

5.
But the tree waves now,
reminds me that symphonic flourish
is not enough, just razzmatnazz
instead of rational.
Nothing means anything
the tree reminds
unless you really mean it—
meaning is your job on this earth.

11 June 2021

= = = = =

The shine of miracle
how a hook
by the window
catches light
as it sways so
gently in a draft,
catches light
and gives it back
in this dark room
as if it came
from the original
light itself
anciently always new.

11 June 2021

= = = = =

The absolute, the Gulistan
of it, garden
where it grows
alone,
by self sustained.

The breath endures
become a word
asserts the same,
a rose,
a centaur
sleeping by its kill.

2.
Stone bridge over it,
the river gone.
I spoke with the ambassador

who had not been told
of all the disappearances—
he seemed untroubled,
as if there would always be more.
He gave me a leather notebook
with his country's coat of arms.
But I write for the papers I explained--
he smiled and said the book
would always make me write the truth.
What else is there to fear, I thought.

3.
Be full be full
you wells and you
rivers flow anew--
I read that in a book of spells
and prayed for rain.

4.

The murk of meaning
clouds the sound.
The garden spread,
the rose just was.
Time passed
like rabbits on the lawn,
not meaning much.
That's what they meant
by absolute,
the just being there.
Names no use now.
A rose is another kind
of stone, a stone alone.

12 June 2021

ASKING

What he saw
from the balcony
decided it.
The move
he saw
pigeon
making it)
demanded answer.
He sat down
at his desk and said.

2.
A table is a desk
when you write on it.
Try to keep it simple,
birds read the language
of how we move.
to them we are all alphabet.

3.

He wrote what he thought he was
thinking
but when he read it back it didn't
feel exactly the same. Something else
was speaking, the wind moved the bird,
it's not all in us, he thought,
and started to write some more,

4.

Look over the railing.
Three stories down
a man with umbrella,
woman getting into a car.
Her car, his umbrella,
we belong to things.
And it isn't even raining, is it?

5.

Car and man gone,
otherwise empty sidewalk
has a pigeon on it,
just walking around
right below. hey know.
Grey greasy city bird,
we all are immigrants
down here, wonder
what it speaks in its nest--
do they have nests
or are they always between
sometimes sidewalk and empty sky?

6.

Don't look now.
No end
to what he doesn't know,
doesn't even know
all the words yet.

He wrote on a blank page:
A Man is No Bigger than his Vocabulary.
Then crossed it out, ashamed,
he isn't even as big as
the words he does know,
And why is wind like wound?

7.

A desk is dangerous,
any level surface is,
tempting to travel,
prairies and deserts,
no end in sight.
Back to the balcony,
everything vertical,
pigeon not visible.
Who was the man?
What was the woman's name?

13 June 2021

= = = = =

1.

Thunder woke him,
told his throat
to choke and cough
to wake its man,
The body listens.
He lay there, trying
to hear what it heard,
only the rubble now
receding, the sky
too going away.

2.

Went outside
sat on the deck
pretended it had
a ship to be on
going someplace.

But only the birds
went there, and soon
enough came back.

3.
So be here
is all he could do,
uncomfortable ease
of a garden chair.
Watch the trees,
pray for forgiveness.

4.
The words helped
if he said the right ones,
there are so many
and most of them
seem to be asking
why. But the world

was like the Auschwitz
guard: “Here
there is no why,”
Set word against world—
which will win?
Better go in now
before the rain.

14 June 2021

= = = = =

**Fear the principal
and the interest
will take care of itself.**

**Bad dreams only when awake!
More bridges than rivers!
Thorns only when roses!**

FIND THE PLACE.

**It could be a hollow
between two hills
or a board plain
looking to the sea.**

**Find the place
where words come to mind,
where the ground itself
chants your liturgy.**

**When the Jews were on the move
wherever the Ark sat down at night,
that was their temple-
no need for the pompous
arguments of architecture.
We too are on the move,
and place itself is generous.
Earth is temple enough
for every logic—**

**find the place
that says your prayers,
hill of Tara, soft
slopes of Erigal.**

15 June 2021

= = = = =

In the northern queendom
the shavegrass spreads,
the girls of the kibbutz
police the fields,
rye ripe, wheat waits.
roads rimmed with flowers,
early season. Back home
the boys polish alabaster plates
for the girls to use
when they come home
to inscribe in that soft stone
the dreams and verities
of their busy day.
Everything grows!
I have read in dreams
some of those bright disks
and learned the ways
of poetry and such,
music, memory, all the snorts

of beasts and whispering lovers,
childbirth, winter time,
the Proust in every one,
o song is the only
cure for memory!
That's what the girls told me
when they came home
not weary even yet from
orchard and vineyard and field.

15 June 2021

= = = = =

Men came by early
and hanged the trees.
The tree endured
their lacerations
(done for the benefit
of some power line)
and still kept talking.
Keeps talking now
soft with morning,
one quiet word
holding up the sky.

15 June 2021

= = = = =

I am allowed
to know a story
but not to tell it,
a road I can see
but may not walk.
Or like the sky,
there but never here.

2.

The story would explain many things,
history would fold its hands together
and keep silence while the story knows,
knows and knows and tells
until all of us understand where
we come from and why
and who is still there waiting
with us, for us, to go on.

3.

I tell myself Stop
thinking about roads.
Tell what you can
and go to sleep, let
the rest of them guide
the ship. Then I remember.
No ship. No road.

4.

The earth spins so fast
so we can stand still.
Staying is going.
I think only the Chinese
poets understood this,
the shimmering blue
distances are always right here.

5.

The wind knows it too,
wherever it comes from
it's always right here.

To history or common sense
this is sheer heresy.

o keep the real in real estate,
boundaries are the bones of society,
edges are the only truth...

See what I am up against,
hearing a story I cannot tell?

16 June 2021

= = = = =

The men in yellow hats
are at the trees again today,
remorseless, coarse and cutting.
The beech they butchered
is wounded but not muted,
tosses its language even now
joyous in the morning wind.
Lord, they should be our teachers,
stand tall, flourish
a few hundred years,
live on night and air,
toss their leaves to tell us
all we really need to know.

16 June 2021

THE ACTION

Trying to get the hand
to trace the tree. No.
Trying to obey
whatever moves.
Closer. Effortless floating,
motionless breeze.

2.
He laid the brush aside
and let the eye do its work.
Ocher glowed on the palate--
colors do call to us,
smear me on the world.
He picked up the brush again,
felt safer with it in his hand.

3.

Or the poet
moping by the canal
wishing a swan would come
or heron or mallard or
anything at all.
It is not good to be alone
by water, the words
flow so easily away.

4.

Smell the sunlight?
It woke you too,
easing through the window
when we tried so soft
to go on sleeping.
Try to conquer the world
dream with our own sly dream,
miracle of sleep.

But wake now,
hope-happy im the hapless morn.

5.
Often it's like a chessboard,
this place I wake in,
but the stately images
keep shifting identities.
Horse becomes bishop,
king becomes queen--
but then they start turning
into entities with no names
or none that I know,
dragons with no flame,
squids with boots and crutches,
dancers made of paper tissue,
float, float over the angry squares.

6.

Calm down, calm down,
there's a wide cloud
coming over the trees.
in a few days they will call it summer,
then there will be other things to do,
other dreams to analyze by waking,
walking, going down the stairs,
feeding the birds, checking the mail,
tossing the catalogues away.
Then it is day, Mahler
on the radio. No news at all.
I know no better
so I call it living,
the trees outside
just this one window
have more leaves
than a library.
Read them and no weeping.

17 June 2021

NICOLE

You grew in mountains,
knew them by eye, sound
of the wind, thunder,
knew them by walking.
You studied them and they
studied you until they found
themselves inside you,
humor of cliff, intensity
of chasm, quiet sunlit
slopes, crisis of the peaks.
And you knew them--
every bone a new verse,
airy, climbing, climbing
against the guilt of gravity.
You learned how to rise.
And now your feet walk
up the mountainside or
any wall and leave
bright traces of your passage,

**the words you learned
from the Pyrenees, words
your bones remember.**

***Happy Birthday, Nicole,
18 June 2021.***

= = = = =

After all
here is an album
with no snapshots in it
and no songs.

You turn the sticky pages
and the smell of the forest
flutters briefly, dies down,
leaves a low humming
sort of smell, like dust
on a china bowl.

Here
is an album with a thousand
leaves, old glue, here and there
a scribbled word in white ink,
sometimes the sound of a key
falling on the sidewalk,
or a rubber ball rolling down stone steps.

**Here, open it for yourself
if you feel you need to--
you know it all already.
But sometimes it helps
to know what you know.**

18 June 2021

= = = = =

The other side of the road
goes the wrong way--
how hard that is for a child
to understand. Shouldn't a road
always be right? Or like
the sky go all ways at once.

18 June 2021

= = = = =

Porcupines
used to live over there
and we had
beavers in our pond.
Then thirty
years ago the immigrants
came in winter,
wild turkeys and vultures,
wild cats and bears.
The language keeps changing
but the ordinary
citizens persist, squirrels
red and grey, woodchucks,
chipmunks as my hand.

18 June 2021

= = = = =

No reason to be anywhere else—
I think that's what the Greek means,
just a few words scribbled on a rock
and the rock supports a column
and the column holds up a dome.
Or am I talking about the earth,
and the column is sunlight
and those aren't letters on the rock
just time scratch and weather wound
and no one knows what Homer means.

18 June 2021

= = = = =

If I were a bishop
I would bleat in the pulpit,
tell the faithful
to file out of church and go
off the road and up the fields
and sing hymns in the shape of the meadow,
liturgies
like the hills all around them
align their aspirations with the ancient earth.

18 June 2021

= = = = =

Garish, maybe,
but a flock of birds
springs out when

ah yes, when I open
my mouth. Crows
if I'm lucky, sparrows

more likely. Can't
help it, birds are words,
everybody knows that.

18 June 2021

ON THE OTHER HAND

On the other hand
there are no rings.
A ring is power
and binds you to itself.
Look at the ruby:
your strength is your weakness.

2.
On the other hand
the naked fingers wait
powerless and pure.
The sun is always rising.
You're weak at logic,
strong at being there.

3.
On the other hand
what else could you do?
Metambesen gushes

down the rapids to the river,
small feeds large,
the tree takes notes.

4.

When it is seven wake.
Everything motionless
but you. Ask the sun
for the day's instruction,
hold light in your hand.

5.

The world is autistic,
you're the only one here,
you move among phantoms,
thank God your hand s empty.

6.

This quiet never lasts
but comes again.
Sabbath, All your life

you've tried to understand
Saturday. You used to cry
Who are you? till you fell asleep.

7.

The other hand
has brought you here.
Something is complete.
Leaves are stirring now.
Help the wind remember.

19 June 2021

= = = = =

When all the other trees are quiet
the beech keeps talking.
That's why it let us use
its ame for printed words,
Buche, beech, *Buch*, book,
books never stop talking,
The tree itself just told me this.

19 June 2021

= = = = =

How things talk—

You look at them
or touch them
and leave your mind
alone.

Wait.

Find in your own mouth
whatever words come.

Silence
is their conversation
so listen soft.

19 June 2021

5 OCTOBER 1952

Wake me sooner. Hurry me, the glue place closes sooner, I have to walk faster than I can walk, Meanwhile the carapace of the crab-like thing crackles softy as it crawls along the counter. Restore me to the littoral! it seems to want. Who am I to question it? Between the need for glue and its need for sea I have little choice, but then morning is so often like this. I mean like that, dreams everywhere to come to terms with, and why not? What else does a person really have to do? Bleary-eyed like barley broth we go our way. We need ocean

too, at least the white noise on the radio between the stations, who lives there? What are they really saying with their so called static? Static! It moves more than anything, faster than language even, full of hope and far away. Now tenderly pick it up, take the bus down to the beach, walk to a tide pool, I know how, and set this person free.

20 June 2021

7 OCTOBER 1952

I took the milk back to the store too. Spoiled thugh it had today's date on it, it must have been hot in the night, or somebody's lying. And they do. Merchandise seems to make liars of us all, or robbers. They have me dirty looks but my money back you can do a lot with a quarter: newspaper, cigarettes and a nickel r for the ferry. I found a few pack of Camels in his top drawer and took one for me I hope he doesn't mind,. And there were matches too. I wish the bus would come, it's pretty cold for October, so why did the milk go bad? I'll have to try to think

**another way about these things. I wonder if this
is what they mean by alchemy.**

20 June 2021

== ==

Twenty years later
there is a library.
A blonde librarian,
a walnut tree.
I forget which book
but it was one,
her hand to mine
then a week later
mine to hers,
on time. A special
book, but all
I can recall
of it is the look
of her lips, sound
of a smile.

20 June 2021

= = = = =

Crow by
crow the day.
It gets early
as I get older,
sometimes even
see the beginning.
Sunday *bereshith*
who knows what's next?
Cellophane crispness
cool morning air.
Sometimes voices
on the road.
I am not alone.

20 June 2021

= = = = =

A moving car
is the loneliest thing,
ship on an endless
ocean of morning,
no farrier to coax
its flanks, just all-
by-itselfing groans
through the trees.
Not a ship, not a horse,
just a wheel with
only one idea.

20 June 2021

= = = = =

**They live so long
they must know
the future too,
they have seen
so often what
becomes of me.
Arborescent intelligence!
A leaf for every
day to come**

20 June 2021

BELL

**Time for church—
open your
hearts and forgive.**

20.VI.21

=====

I wait in the parking lot.
Messiah rings the half-hour.
A city feel it gives this town,
as if time mattered still
and something comes of all this.
All what? Driving and waiting
and driving away. Here
is always someplace else.

20 June 2021

= = = = =

In between
or on behalf
sing!

Sing loud
like Bruckner
solo

in his organ perch
empty church.

20 June 2021

= = = = =

I try again tp know you.
It is not easy.
The roses bloomed and went,
the pale hydrangeas
just came out. But you!
I don't know your schedule,
your ins and out, don't even
know the way to talk towards you.
O you undiscovered copper mine
smirking at me from every hill,
every mound a meaning,
a maybe. Or maybe gold.

20 June 2021

SCRATCHES FROM AN OLD SKETCHBOOK

Don't smile,
smile a sideways
snarl, a smile
intends to deceive.

*

Silence is golden?

Father music
mother silence.

We are the gleam of gold.

*

Hugging, clinging to
the hem of darkness

*

After a few minutes
I shaped listening
into form
and heard the music.

*

She runs to the house
built of what she does

*

The dam holds
all we forget.
we are irrigated
by all we don't remember.

*[gathered with Charlotte's help
20 June 2021]*

SOLSTICE

The day has come.
Where had it been,
hidden in the stones
dry river bottom
or last year's leaves
where chipmunks burrow,
everyone waits.

Summer.
Through the wooden doors
that have no walls
at their Ringheiligum
the Saxons watched
their sun ascend.
And we too have wept
at Stonehenge.
how boisterous
waiting is, the crowd,
nervous, hugs and laughter.

But still the sun
consented to ascend.

Why are there so many
people and only one sun?
Isn't there supposed to be
a sun inside each one of us?
Aren't we dry rivers too
and broken meadows
with not a sheep in sight?

Only one sun.
The skinny insect
on my window screen
knows as much as I do
about cosmology,
same sun, same wind,
same darkness to refuel.
Down and up, out and in--
it could even be a love song.

21 June 2021

IN MEDIAS RES

Each of us is born
between her thighs,
the mother,
we come into the world
between, squeezed
out, squeezed in,
her long thighs
still around us as we grow.
As we go, Even now
we are between,
squeezed in time
or free in space
or the other way round,
held tight by what we see.
I am just a dialect of flesh
caught in a sticky summer,
a little puzzled, immature.
Aren't I supposed to be old?

21 June 2021

= = = = =

Lately only the trees
will talk to me.
The girls are busy
and the boys asleep.
But the beech is articulate
and the lindens constant
in their friendship.
Talking with a tree
is a little like riding
up in an elevator
except you're still on the ground.
Safe. Safe in hearing.
Serene and thoughtful,
even a little playful
but nothing rough.
They have so much time
they can afford to be gentle.

21 June 2021

LOVE SONG

Pretend I am an ice cube
melting in your drink.
Changing the atmosphere
that you take in—
nothing more insidious than that.
Or I am a framed picture
in a hotel room you never look at
twice, or even once,
but it reassures you
that a wall is there
a barrier, a privacy,
something to make sense inside.

21 June 2021

= = = = =

Trying to find a way in
to investigate the *virgin day*
with no miracles,
no ravages. Be still
with me the day says,
any day, every day. all
quiet as any tree.

A day.

A sky like Mallarmé
teasing the ambiguities
of light and shade.
In the city they vote
today, up here we pray,
fox and bobcat, wolf and bear,
more priests than people,
more trees than men.

**Than me. I I would be various
if I could. every bone in me
a separate player, but no,
I am a single leaf.**

22 June 2021

= = = = =

How lush the green
the after rain,
where is the language
to flush me clean.

22 June 2021

= = = = =

The whole orchestra playing at once
the cars keep shuddering the road
the culverts alongside filled
with reflecting pools that tell
a quiet story as they go by, yes,
listen and run, yes, linger and tell,

convince yourself it all is music,
nooligan trombones, grumpy timpani,
have it your own way, our ears
make the music anyhow, all
the rest is cars groaning past
and women rushing up the stairs
and children playing on the sidewalk.
Do they still hop in squares of chalk?
Is anybody listening even now?
Because everything is after.

**We are heirs of one after another
incomprehensible experience,,
trapped in lairs of language.
The alarm clock says it all.
We're stranded on this island we call day.**

22 June 2021

= = = == = = =

Dear prophet
whiskered with smiles
waiting in the desert
for the ferry.

No need of ocean,
island, crossing
is enough, follow
his shadow east

into the ancient
onset, hurry
to read the first
page again!

22 June 2021

= = = = =

Sometimes just a clue
is needed. to tell
what the words are.

What they mean
takes longer. live
the sound and silence

of them till they make sense.

22 June 2021

= = = = =

knives forks and spoons
no commas anywhere
we are squeezed between
the boundaries of
ordinary things,

shirt pants and shoes
we do have choices
what color is your tie

teh daft conundrum
of what to do
it makes us do.

23 June 2021

= = = = =

Opening the obvious
should be a treat
and yet we clamber
up a rocky hill
of no great height
until we see not much
more than where we've been.
turn around and watch
ourselves struggle to reach
nowhere in particular.

23 June 2021

= = = = =

Enough of my strictures,
moral lectures
anybody can fill in for themselves,
enough playground talk
and prison mess hall,
enough sparse chapel
with a hint iof bleach.
A gay girl from Uganda
set me straight—go out
if you want to change
the world, go outside
and pick up a stone,
hold it in your hand
until you really feel it,
then let it fall.'

23 June 2021

= = = = =

The sun has reached
the top of the tulip tree
and the very top of the beech.
Now I believe the blue sky
but I'm still far from what I mean.
Try the clarinet, that tube sounds
lie somebody, anybody, else
whining, or try the staple gun
that holds the fence together,
upright, shielding from the other.
Trees do the job for us,
hiding the other side of now.

23 June 2021

= = = = =

I'm not exactly a crocodile
in your swimming pool
but I do thrash about,

I'm maybe more a wild boar
in your honeysuckle
endlessly distracted by
small sweet things,

a breath! Shadow
of a swishing robe!
A bird too high to name!

Or am I just an ordinary bore,
a busybody like a rocking chair,
a car with no road, a sleeve
turned inside out?

**You do this
to me, confuse the issue
so I'm never certain if what I mean
is what I really mean
or what you take to be my meaning
if you know what I mean.
And if not, that's your fault too.
Love is not the easiest religion.**

23 June 2021

TREE

Amiable animal!
I caress
your shadows
I taste your colors
from far off.

I am shy
and you are wonderfully
tall and strong,
wise with what I so
desperately need to know.

23 June 2021

= = = = =

I said to a sailor
bring me the ocean
and I'll buy us a boat
he did and I did
then the hard part began.
Lemuria sank,
Atlantis arose,
we kept sailing west
till west became east
and the sun welcomed
us on her veranda
and here we sit, sun
sailor and me, sipping
the sweet air, three
of us wondering when
all the rest would arrive.

24 June 2021

= = = = =

She used to love me
but then the living began.
I'm good at lot of things
(etymology, Asian cuisine,
mixed conversation)
but not at living. Living
drives lovers apart, living
is just so complicated.
But the moon is full night
and there is a little nook
called silence where love
sometimes lingers after
one more tumultuous day.
Maybe she will meet me there
again, maybe we will be.

24 June 2021

= = = = =

The mail is often dangerous
but last night was special,
there was a tiger in the post office,
loose, angry, hurtling against
the wooden wall that divides
customers from government.
Then he leapt over the wall
and I was done for. No more
letters for or from me,
no more zip codes, no more stamps.
Communication was finished with me.

24 June 2021

= = = = =

Sunny,
and a cloudless sky
but there's stormy
weather in the alphabet.
Letters keep making words
I didn't think I meant
but there they are, strange
as someone else's lips
pressed against one's own.
If anything is my own.

The alphabet will have its way,
it has ruled the West since Egypt
Civilization means pretending
to make sense of what just happens,
karmic outcome, beast blunders,
plunder, cries of dying men.

**The alphabet knows all of that,
does what it can, letter by letter
in marble or on some fluid screen
tells me what I'm supposed to think.
That's why reading is so hard:
every word points somewhere else.**

24 June 2021

= = = = =

What do words
make us do?
Do women have to
linger in lingerie?
Does rust erode
trust, so friends
drift apart, rift
between them?
Friend has
end built in.

24 June 2021

MIDSUMMER DAY

Feast of Saint John, say,
or all the saints.
they're still with us,
slim-hipped virgins,
learnèd louts
clustered round the cradle
where I get born
again and again
we all do, I call
the saints to witness
that we are here again,
full summer, wild
turkey strutting up the lawn.

24 June 2021

= = = = =

Strange how the days
look like one another
but the dreams sneak in
past the border guards,
wearing weird costumes
so the guards laugh or pity,
pity what passes in the dream.

2.

There is a wooden ship
upon a wild rolling sea,
sails pregnant with destination,
no crew aboard, captain
alone in his cabin,
keeping the log up to date.
He puts his pen down, thinks
*Wind. Weather. Things
take care of themselves.*

3.

But here there is a quiet in the air
soft as the ages of a book,
an old one, you read it as a child
and here it is again, in the shadow,
in the trees. Sometimes silence
takes so many words to say.

4.

They use their lives
waiting for yesterday,
these holy ones yearning
for that one utterly pure
moment when they began.
They frighten us a little
with their intensity and so
we call them funny names,
monks, nuns, hermits, sages,
and tease them, whispering
ha, this is still tomorrow.

5.

Glass doors are dangerous--
unless the light is just right
when you go in you meet
yourself coming out. Why bother
you think, and drop your hand
from the handle, stare
at yourself, still the same,
why bother with the door,
the staircase, the wooden door
three flights up that maybe,
maybe will open to show
someone else standing there.

6.

The other is the furthest friend.
When my eyesight was still keen
I once had a terrifying moment--
I looked deep into a lover's eyes
and saw my own face staring out.
I tried to be calm, philosophical,

deep inside the other the self
is waiting. that sort of thing.
But what does it mean, what
does it mean, my tiny face
in those beautiful eyes of one
who must be looking back at me.
Are we just reciprocals? Look
the word up and tell me if I'm right.

7.
Unity
means wandering
everywhere
and still being,
being
who you started
out to be
and still are.
Unity in every step,
unity in every doorway,
gust of wind,

**phone call, junk mail
dropped from your special hand.
Unity is heartbeat,
step by step,
never stop,
unity is never all at once.**

25 June 2021

NOW

What do I know about now?
Now is a smallish country
like Slovenia, with dragon bridges
and language of its own,
fought for independence
not too long ago and celebrates
today. Always today. Raise
the flag, hum the anthem—
you still have not learned the words.

25 June 2021

= = = = =

Everything falls
hut everything stays in place.
Mystery of gravity.
Old bones found every year,
dragon-man's skull from China,
is time the same as gravity?
And what if all the words
poit the same way?
Sometimes waking up
is worse than any nightmare.

26 June 2021

= = = = =

Dear friend I have never
known your frown.
Your smile stays with me
but sometimes I wonder
if we ever know each other
before we feel the bone
inside the tender flesh.
Have you been too good to me?

26 June 2021

PERMISSIONS

**I hereby grant you
permission to reprint
the two mentioned texts
of which I own the copyright.
You must assure me
that someone someday
will read them.
I waive all other fees.**

26.VI.21

= = = = =

West water
flows back in.
we call it east
and we begin.
We are not circles
but we have circles in us—
“the body is twice incarnate” (MLZ)
again and again it rolls
back to make me be me.

26 June 2021

= = = = =

I have not listened well today—
the wind reminds me
that the trees use to shout
when their quiet instructions
miss my dull ears.
Toss leaves until I hear!

I trust you, beech tree,
and quiet lindens,
I am slow of study today,
let the air you speak forgive me,
But here I am again,
talking instead of listening.

26 June 2021

QUIET MORNING

Car door.

Corridor.

Sounds lead somewhere—
weather tells us
we are not alone.

Car door,
who came?
Who is going?

Music is not the only way
sound questions us
and sometimes answers.

26 June 2021

= = = = =

I faced north
but it didn't help,
recited silently
the Litany
of the Three Virgins
but was still awake
when the prayer
was done,
I lay on my right side
and studied the wall
but it was lined with books,
words getting in between
me and the thingliness
of things, truth,
the mild manifesto
of an empty wall.

27 June 2021

= = = = =

So much was given
now for the spade work

digging in the silence
to find the day's food.

I mean word.

Or what

I call meaning
is whatever I find

or finds me
down here up here in me.

27 June 2021

= = = = =

Some times are truer
than others--
kiss your clock and ask
it to tell not the right
time but the rightest time,

the only time, lick
the cool bronze loop
it keeps your hours in,
most delicately touch
the minute hand or even
if you dare the second
hand as it sweeps past
on its way to now.

If your clock has a bell
or buzzer maybe it will sound
the moment you've been
all these years waiting for.

Or maybe not. Read the face
it carefully, kiss it again
and put it back on the shelf,
the wall, your wrist or
wherever you dare
to keep your time.

27 June 2021

= = = = =

So many deaths
in so many wars
I wonder if George
was right who said
we keep on killing
to feed the moon,
George Johnson that is,
from some old Armenia,
who said the sky
is hungry for our lives,
energies, the universal
elixir of human blood.
George Johnson Gurdjieff
I mean, who taught
some of us to dance.
And when you see
your enemy, think:
Christ died for him too.

27 June 2021

= = = = =

I sit quiet
in my understanding.
The park
walks around me,
a bird is saying
something behind my back.

A woman on a bench
nearby crosses her legs
then crosses them again
the other way.
To be complete.

This is my Iliad, my Trojan War
to strive against the distances
and bring all things close,
close, all the way home.

27 June 2021

= = = = =

I am the middle of the afternoon
at least, things waiting for me
everywhere. Alexandria. Donegal.
There is a rushing stream
the dad wade through that washes
some of their genetics away,
alkaline to that sacred acid.
We are all misspellings of the text,
slight or massive. What is
an afternoon, after all, but a fall
from the middle—where does that
leave the sleepy gentile on his couch?
To Egypt then I hurry with closed eyes.
Athena caught her owl there—
now bring me home. If I still smoked
cigarettes, I'd know how to end this song

27 June 2021

= = = =

**Hot day. Detective story.
Breeze in bushes. Guess.
Keep guessing. No crime
like time No sleuth
like a suspicious wife.
Why is the witness nervous?
Why is the judge asleep?
Turn the page. Every word
says wake up. That
is the whole business of the law.**

27 June 2021

== ==

Once there was
another side of me.
But then I slept
and when I woke
the animal was gone.

27 June 2021

LEVIATHAN

chambered in the dark,
give me a new name
for when I sleep,
Hebrew as heaven
and an iron gate.

2.
No one knows
how old the owl is,
the hollow cautions
from its beak,
it gave its horned shape
to be our letter *M*,
mother, mama,
the salt of Tlas
everlasting us.

3/

In the dark bedroom
it's hard to know
the size of things—
we walk on memory
with frightened feet,
why not, going
has never been easy
even when you're here.

4.

So who is that animal inside?
It feels whale-wide
and thunder-ripe,
the thought of it
wakes the drowsiest child.

5.

Always north,
always anyhow.
Webreathe our breakfast

and forgive the light.
A hundred thousand years
on this same road.

6.
Ancillary animal
we suppose to be,
ourselves,
to make the world go on,
a function we perform
without understanding
what it is it does we do.

7.
Middle of the hot night..
Train hoots by the river,
all our suppositious mornings
soft mushrooms ar in tree roots
nesting, holy humidity.

28 June 2021

= = = = =

Rikki's father was a warrior.
On plywood tables
landscaped together in the attic
he waged symbolic strife
with little soldiers, tiny horses,
all kinds of rules that I forget.
So many things I forget.
I think we played Waterloo that day,
I was Napoleon and maybe won.
But winning changes nothing.
The world was just the same outside,
the road still chattering with students,
droll professors eying them go by,
the priest across the street,
the philosopher netting in the stream.
No, panning for gold, he told me once,
but Rikki's father and I stayed
faithful to our game. Just once
in all those years. A window

I forgot to look through.
So many things I did not see.
Gold dust must have been
coming down from the hills,
lead and silver mines
three dozen miles away.
I am a soldier too, I believe
everything I'm told.

28 June 2021

== ==

I want to tell you the truth
but it's not ripe yet.
It has hands and knees in it
and knapsacks and manuscripts,
hair clippings, noises
that turn out to be foreign words.
Because the truth
has every language in it,
forests and rivers,
every river but the Nile.
The Nile is always weeping for the truth.

28 June 2021

=====

**The Sanhedrin gathered round
the quaking sinner
but then they saw that she was laughing:**

**religion is a business
God is never trapped by,
God lives on the other side of it
deep in our own hearts,
even yours, even mine.**

28 June 2021

SALT

It must be true
what they say about salt,
it is the whole earth
inside us, reaching up,
sharpening the taste
of things, raising
the blood pressure,
teaching us up. how
far can we go. Salt
is a ;ittle flashlight
aimed at the night sky.

29 June 2021

=====

Too many determinants.
Heat wave, bad weather,
the clock ticking. Not a leaf
stirs in summer such.
Scribble all you like,
the summit approaches.
Some mountains climb themselves.
Short sentences leading to God.

29 June 2021

= = = = =

Let it rain
for a change,
scary this
silence.
I'm Irish,
I think everything
has a message,
a meaning,
things tell me things
and frighten me.
And there the sky is
all the while.
Oh if only.

29 June 2021

= = = = =

Not all the memorials
are cut into stone.
Some linger near us
in the shape of trees
or wake the clouds up
to remind.
The sound of metal
gleaming on metal,
the taste of shadows.

29 June 2021

= = = = =

There's more wit in waiting.
Drape over mirror,
shade pulled down.
Waiting is the practice of in.

Then the beech tree
let its branches sway,
relief is on the way.
Time does this to us every day,
a shock to wake before the world.

29 June 2021

= = = = =

If today were tomorrow
this would be yesterday
and I could rule this past
all round me like Caesar,
make memory stand still,
carve messages in clouds,
speak at last to all my friends,
tell them what I really mean.
Love Conquers All the locket says,
I drape in on a sunbeam
and smile, my task complete.

29 June 2021

= = = = =

Applause
at the beginning.
Then the silence
of the actual,
the olive trees of [Burbank
child in a red skirt
sitting on the lawn,
blood stained cobbles
where you tread
on the ripe olives' flesh ,
dark skinned, red within,
you try not to crush them,
so many, they are so many.

2.

The storm took down
trees and power lines.
The night spoke Latin,

roaring it all round us
and rain pelted in,
desk by window drenched
what will the woods
think of next?

3.
It's always time
to do another thing.
Willingness of the actual,
the endless opera of gravity.
Choose! Change!

4.
The chamberlain is sent over
to fetch the child in—
wet clothes tsk tsk the risk
of cold. But she is gone now,
nowhere to be found.

How bitter these olives are,
he thinks, until they ripen
and cure and come to us again.
But where is she?

5.
Not far away, talking to a tree,
eucalyptus by the gulley.
Strange dialect of trees, she thinks.
Each one says such different things,
the language always the same.

30 June 2021

PORLOCK

is never far away.

An angel

dressed as a commoner

hurries from there

to interrupt you

just before you spoil your work

by some formal contrivance,

invention that wasn't in the dream.

Thank him when he comes.

30 June 2021

